

**REMARKS**

Receipt of the final action is acknowledged. The present amendment accompanies a Request for Continued Examination submitted herewith.

Claim 1 stands rejected as anticipated by Evans or Martus. As amended, claim 1 positively recites, in part, a body extending along an axis and having a non-threaded outer side surface sized for insertion into the female member threaded aperture, the body defining first and second axial ends. The first end is positioned in the threaded aperture to face out of the threaded aperture for contact with a tip of the male member. A wedge projects from the first axial end of the body, with the wedge having an inner engagement surface surrounding and engaging the insertion end of the male member when the male member is positioned adjacent first axial end of the body. The wedge further has an outer engagement surface engaging the threaded aperture of the female member, with the wedge being sufficiently pliant to deflect radially outward in response to an insertion force applied to the male member.

By comparison, the “frusto-conical lower end 2” of Evans shown in Fig. 1 does not face out of the threaded aperture. Instead, the body 1 is oriented 180 degrees opposite of what is claimed by claim 1, such that the component 2 faces into the threaded aperture. Further, although the blank 1 initially is devoid of threads, the whole point of the reference is to form threads on the blank. For example, one need look no further than the title of Evans to see the device is for forming threads on the external surface of the blank. Consequently, the reference does not disclose a non-threaded outer surface on the body. Therefore, there simply can be no anticipation based on Evans.

Further, Evans cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as there would be no suggestion to turn the body 1 around (flip the body 180 degrees) in the aperture, as such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the punch 10

shown in Fig. 3. The inability to form the threads destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed change.

The set screw on the Martus reference has a threaded outer surface. Eliminating the threads would render the headless set screw of the reference entirely inoperable, making it impossible for the set screw to stay put inside the threaded aperture. Moreover, the end A11 does not face outwardly, and the surface A17 is not positioned to “engage the threaded aperture of the female member” as presently claimed. Instead, the surface A17 contacts the separate body 14. Martus cannot anticipate claim 1.

Further, Martus has a slot 12 to receive the tool of Fig. 8. The slot 12 precludes that portion of the reference from surrounding anything inserted into the bore/socket 11. Claim 1 requires that the relevant end of the body surround and engage the end of the male member. Thus, Martus again cannot anticipate claim 1, nor could Martus support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as eliminating the slot of the reference would destroy the express purpose of the reference.

Further, on Martus there would be no suggestion to turn the set screw around (flip the screw 180 degrees) in the aperture, as such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the tool of Fig. 8. Notwithstanding the fact that the office action proposes to flip the set screw 180 degrees, there can be no suggestion to make such a change. Flipping the set screw as proposed completely blocks access to the aperture 11, such that the set screw cannot be turned. The inability to turn the set screw destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed changes.

Stitt adds nothing. How exactly is one supposed to place the very enlarged head at the left side of Fig. 2 into the bore? It cannot be done without completely reconstructing the

reference, and thus the reference does not anticipate claim 1 and cannot render claim 1 obvious.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is in allowable form, as are any claims dependent on claim 1.

Claim 9 now positively recites a continuous wedge on the body projecting from the first axial end of the body, the wedge having an inner engagement surface engaging the insertion end of the first connection member and a substantially smooth outer engagement surface contacting the threaded aperture of the second connection member. The wedge is sufficiently pliant to deflect radially outward in response to an insertion force applied to the first connection member.

By comparison, Martus has a slot, and cannot shave a wedge surrounding and engaging anything. The slot precludes surrounding anything. Moreover, Martus is positioned the opposite of what is claimed and, as outlined above with respect to claim 1, the device of Martus cannot be flipped. Thus Martus cannot anticipate claim 9, and cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 9. Therefore, claim 9 is in allowable form. The claims dependent on claim 9 also are in allowable form.

With respect to claim 23, simply put, the reliance on Stitt is puzzling indeed. The individual component parts of Stitt all face the wrong way relative to what is claimed. To call the surface A1 an “engagement surface” is also puzzling, as that surface touches nothing. There simply can be no anticipation. Further, there cannot be a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness based on Stitt, as one would have to completely discard any of the teachings of the reference in order to reach the invention of claim 23.

In view of the above discussion, applicant submits that each of the presently pending claims is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. It is believed that no fees are necessary in

Serial No.: 10/790,524

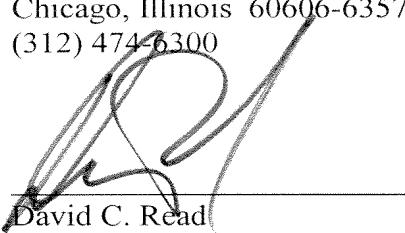
connection with the present Amendment. However, in the event that any fees are due, kindly charge the cost thereof to our Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

Respectfully submitted,

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**December 21, 2006**

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